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(54) **ACOUSTIC DEVICE, AND ELECTRONIC DEVICE AND IMAGE FORMING APPARATUS INCORPORATING SAME**

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G03G 21/16 (2006.01)
G10K 15/04 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***G03G 21/1604*** (2013.01); ***G10K 15/04*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC ... G03G 21/00; G03G 21/1604; G10K 15/04; G10K 11/16; G10K 11/162; G10K 11/172
USPC 399/91, 107; 181/175
See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An acoustic device includes an opening; a flange forming the opening; a first member including the opening and the flange; and a second member joined to the first member, thereby forming a cavity. The second member is formed of a material with a density lower than a material of the first member.

14 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets

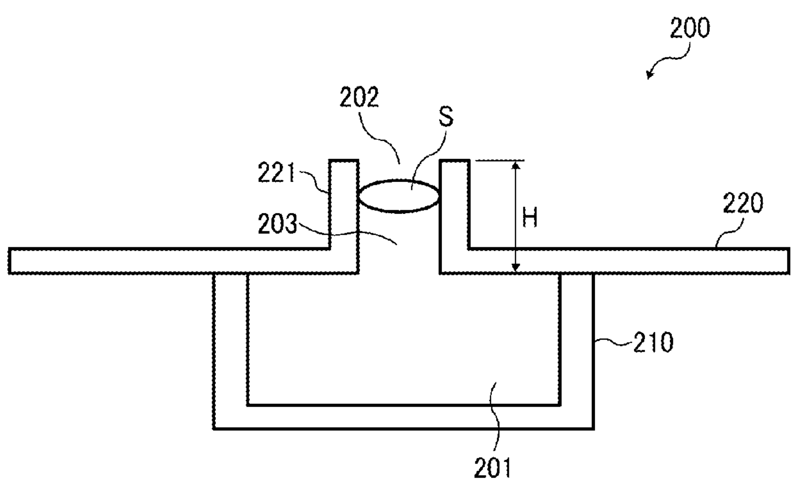
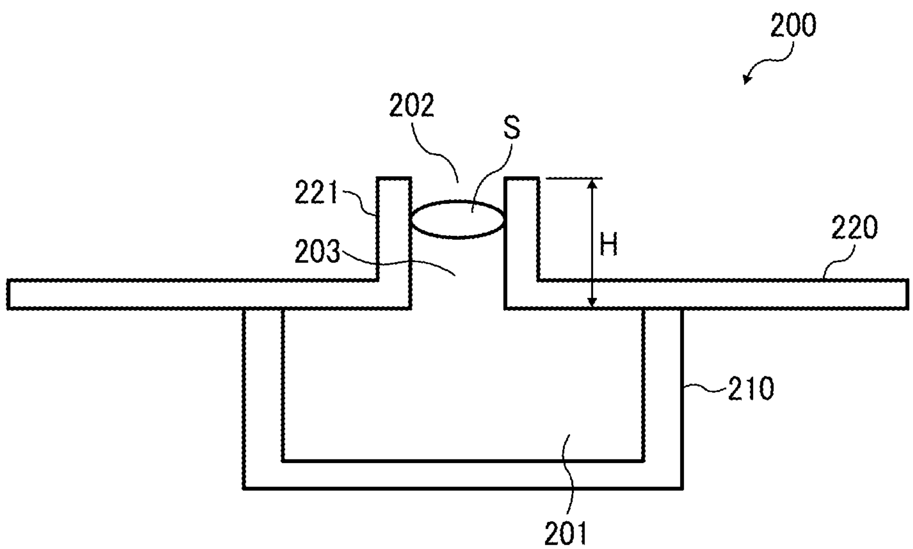
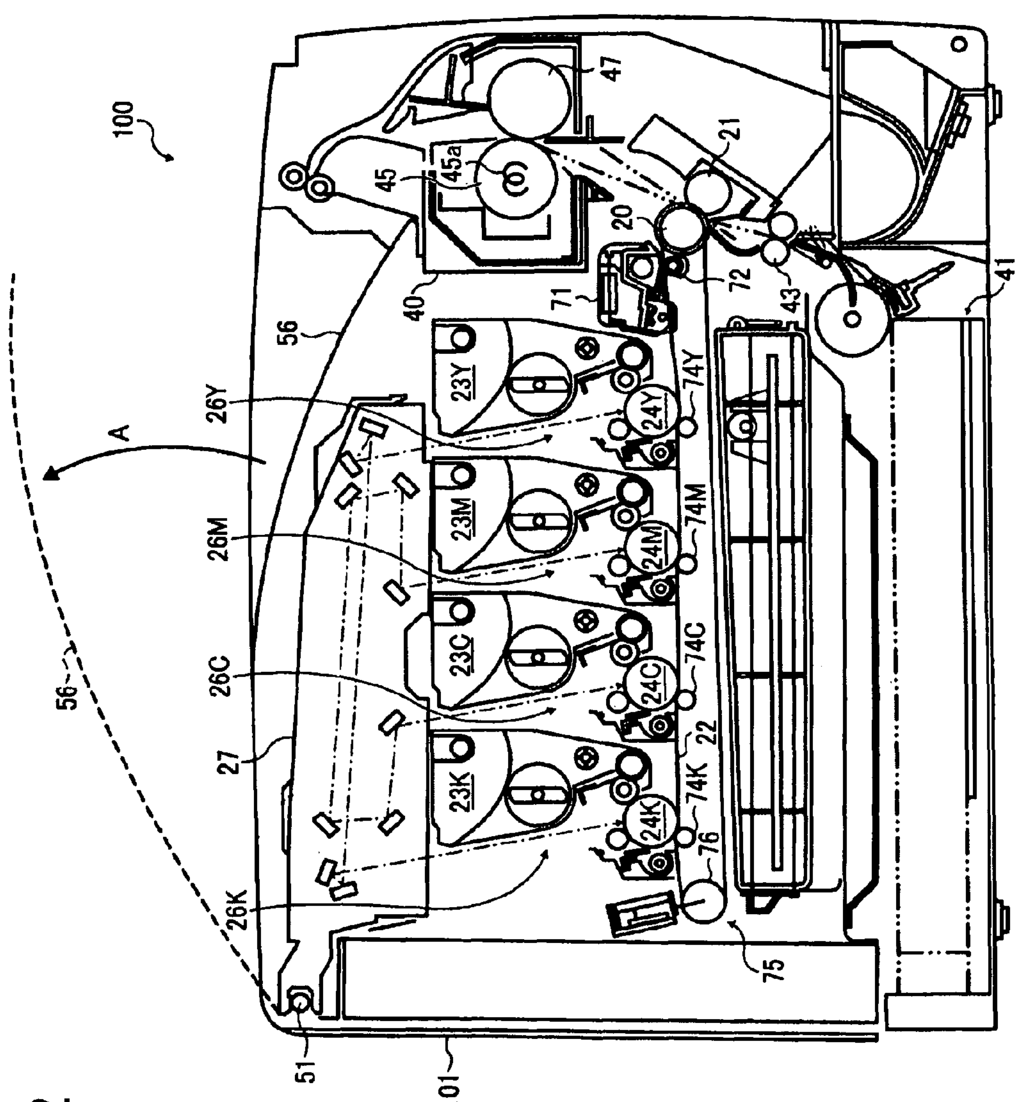


FIG. 1

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26C
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23Y
23M
23C
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74C
74K
22
76
75

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

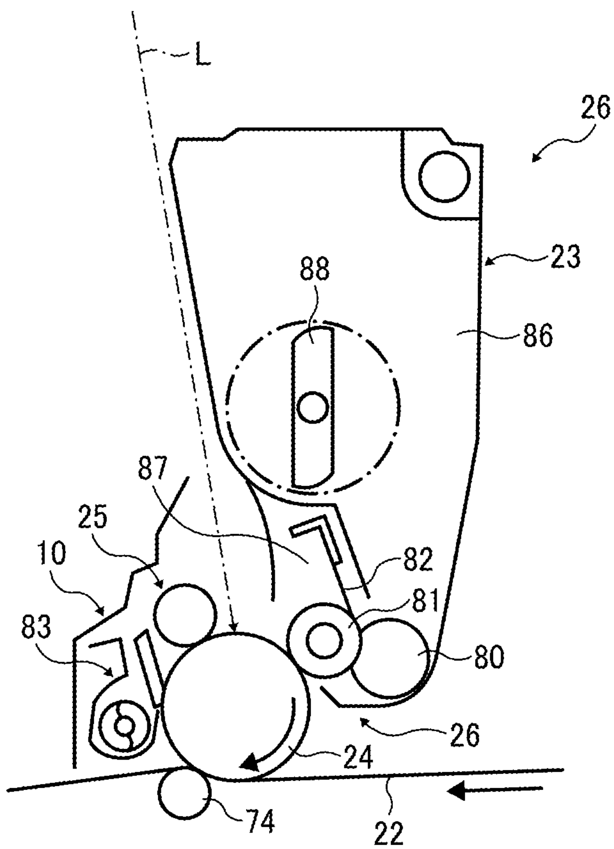


FIG. 4

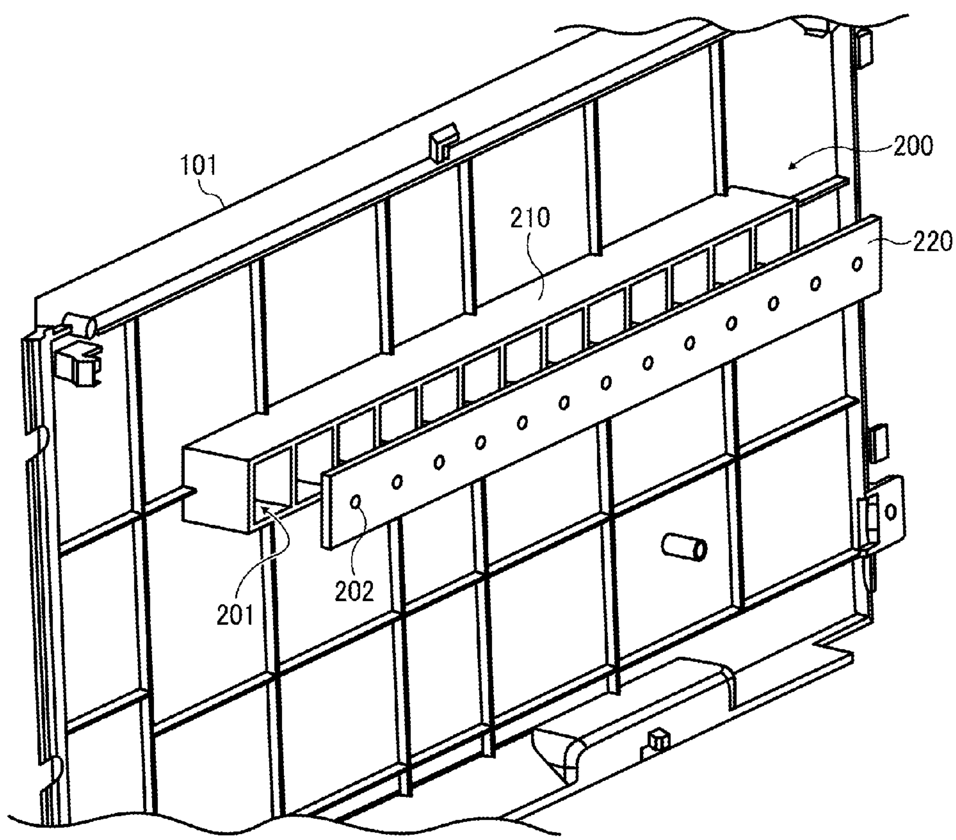


FIG. 5

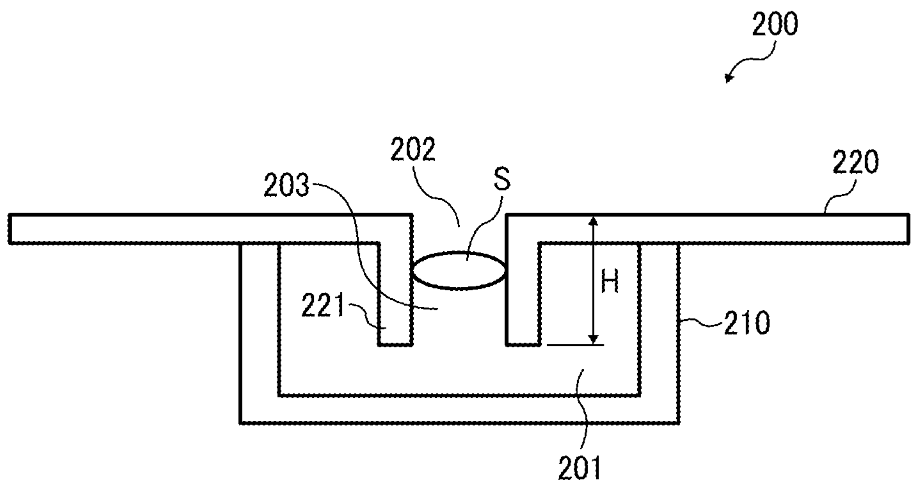
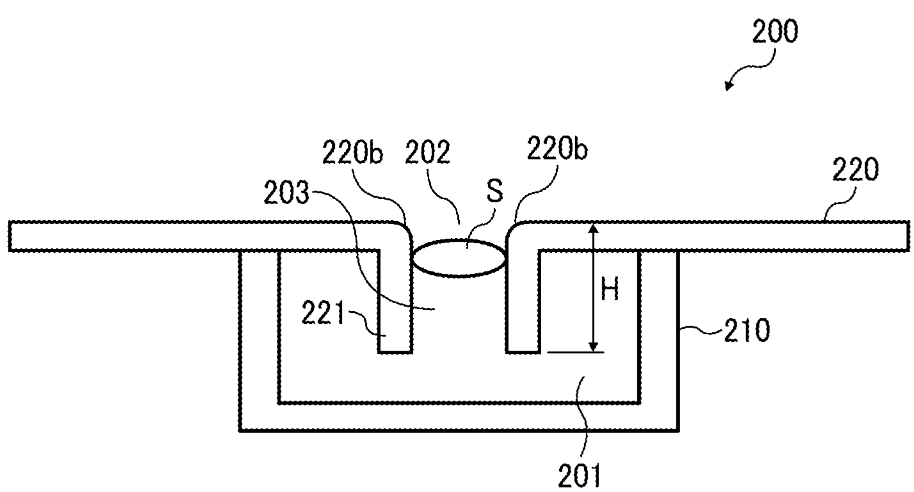

200
202
S
220
203
H
221
210
201

FIG. 6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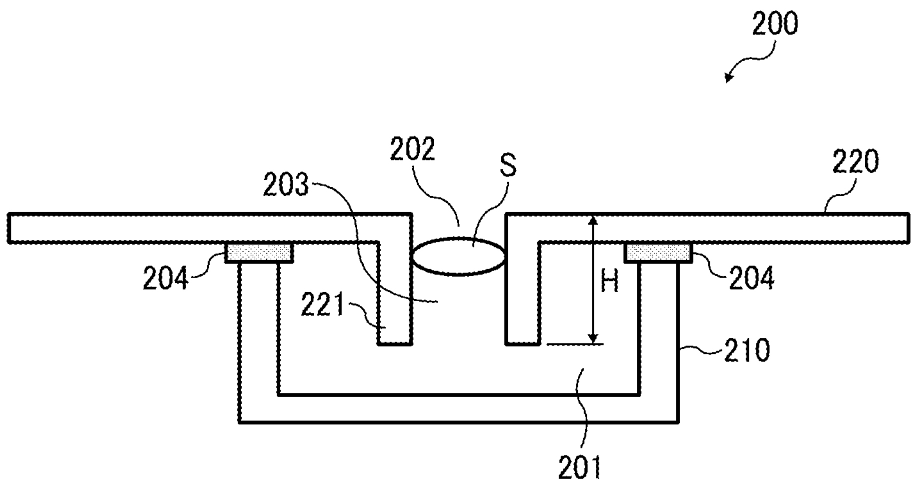
201

FIG. 7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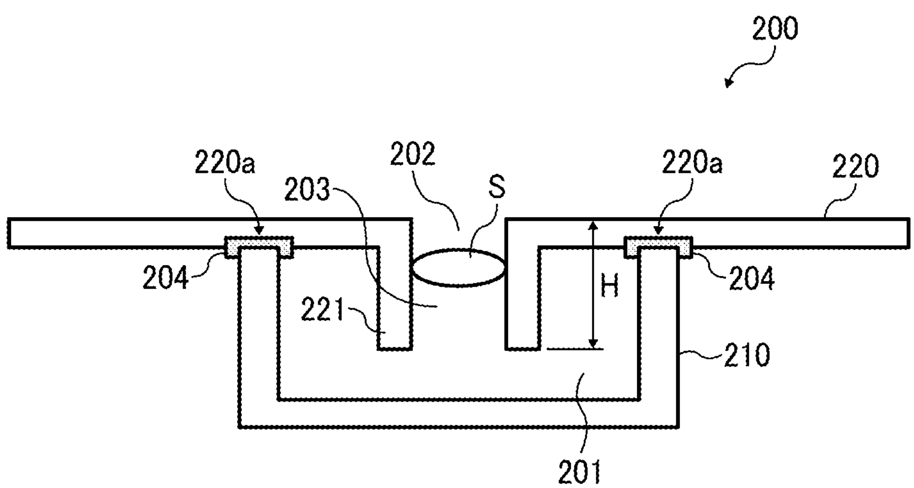
202
S
220
203
204
204
H
221
210
201

FIG. 8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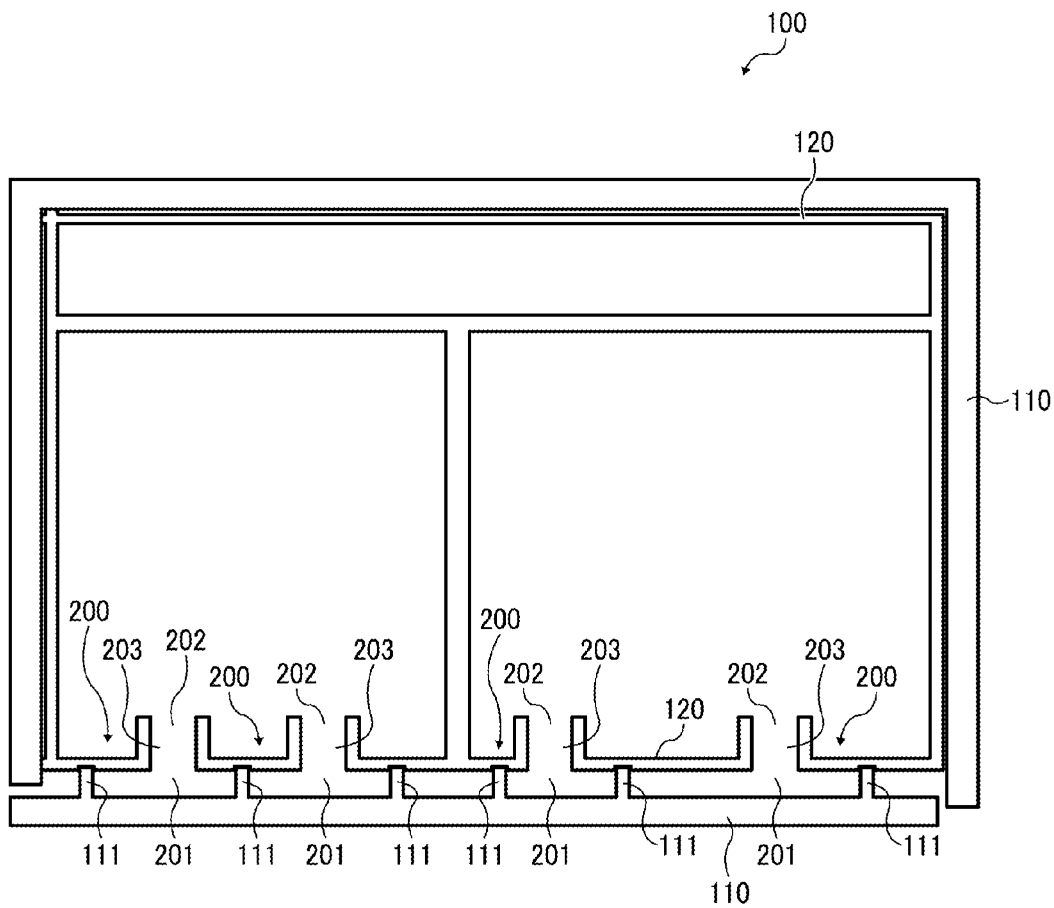
202
220a
220
203
S
204
204
H
221
210
201

FIG. 9


100
120
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202
200
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111
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201
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110

ACOUSTIC DEVICE, AND ELECTRONIC DEVICE AND IMAGE FORMING APPARATUS INCORPORATING SAME

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

The present application claims priority pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119(a) from Japanese patent application number 2014-036268, filed on Feb. 27, 2014, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND

1. Technical Field

Exemplary embodiments of the present invention relate to an acoustic device employing a Helmholtz resonator, and further relates to an electronic device and an image forming apparatus employing the acoustic device.

2. Background Art

Various sounds are generated when various driving devices are driven or a polygon mirror is rotating in the image forming apparatus employing the electrophotographic method. Conventionally, an image forming apparatus including an acoustic device employing a Helmholtz resonator as a structure capable of absorbing sounds generated during image formation, is known.

The Helmholtz resonator is formed of a cavity with a certain volume and a port or a neck. If a static volume of the cavity is V, a cross-sectional area of the port is S, a length of the port in the connection direction is H, and acoustic velocity is c, then a resonant frequency f absorbed by the Helmholtz resonator is obtained by the following formula (1).

$$f=c/2\times\{S/(V\times H)\}^{1/2} \quad (1)$$

In an acoustic device employing the Helmholtz resonator, the cavity needs to be sealed from the external portion to obtain the desired absorption effect.

Based on the above equation (1), it is clear that the volume V of the cavity should be increased as a method of absorbing low-frequency sounds of less than 1,500 [Hz].

SUMMARY

In one embodiment of the disclosure, there is provided an acoustic device including an opening; a flange forming the opening; a first member, such as a port forming member, including the opening and the flange; and a second member, such as a cavity forming member, joined to the first member, thereby forming a cavity. The second member is formed of a material with a density lower than a material of the first member.

In one embodiment of the disclosure, there are provided an electronic device and an image forming apparatus including the acoustic device employing the Helmholtz resonator.

These and other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon consideration of the following description of the preferred embodiments of the present invention when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** schematically illustrates an acoustic device according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **2** illustrates a printer as an image forming apparatus according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **3** illustrates a process unit included in the printer of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **4** illustrates an external wall of the printer seen from an interior side of an apparatus body of the printer;

FIG. **5** schematically illustrates an acoustic device including a port, a port forming member, a cavity, and a cavity forming member, in which the port is disposed farther inside the cavity than the port forming member;

FIG. **6** schematically illustrates the acoustic device of FIG. **5** including an opening with a round corner portion;

FIG. **7** schematically illustrates an acoustic device including a sealing member disposed at each joint portion between the port forming member and the cavity forming member;

FIG. **8** schematically illustrates an acoustic device including a groove portion disposed at each joint portion between the port forming member and the cavity forming member, and the sealing member is disposed in the groove portion; and

FIG. **9** illustrates a housing of the printer and an external cover according to a modified embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Hereinafter, a first embodiment of an image forming apparatus (hereinafter, to be referred to simply as a printer **100**) employing the electrophotographic method will be described.

First, a basic configuration of the printer **100** will be described.

As illustrated in FIG. **2**, the printer **100** includes four process units **26**K, **26**C, **26**M, and **26**Y to form a toner image of respective colors of black (K), cyan (C), magenta (M), and yellow (Y). Except that the process units **26** (K, C, M, Y) employ toner with different colors K, C, M, and Y from each other, all process units are similarly configured and are replaced when spent.

FIG. **3** is an enlarged view of one of the process units **26**. Because the four process units **26** are configured similarly to each other except that the color of toner used is different, suffixes (K, C, M, Y) each showing a color of toner are omitted in FIG. **3**.

As illustrated in FIG. **3**, the process unit **26** includes a drum-shaped photoconductor **24**, a drum cleaner **83** for the photoconductor, a photoconductor unit **10** to hold a discharger and a charger roller **25**, and a developer unit **23**. The photoconductor **24** is drum-shaped and serves as a latent image carrier. Each process unit **26** as an image formation unit is detachably disposed on the printer body and is replaceable as a consumable part at once.

The charger roller **25** uniformly charges a surface of the photoconductor **24** rotating in the clockwise direction driven by a drive unit as illustrated in FIG. **3**. The thus-uniformly-charged surface of the photoconductor **24** is exposed by a laser beam L to thereby carry an electrostatic latent image of each color. The electrostatic latent image is developed into a toner image by the developer unit **23** using the toner. The toner image is thus developed is primarily transferred onto an intermediate transfer belt **22**, which is called a primary transfer.

The drum cleaner **83** removes residual toner deposited on the surface of the photoconductor **24** after the primary transfer. The discharger serves to electrically discharge a residual potential on the photoconductor **24** after the above cleaning process. By this electrical discharge, the surface of the photoconductor **24** is initialized and becomes ready for a following image formation.

The cylinder-shaped drum portion of the photoconductor **24** is formed of a hollow aluminum tube and a coating of organic photoconductive layer coated on an external surface of the aluminum tube. Flanges each including a drum shaft are attached at both lateral ends of the drum portion in an axial direction, to thus form the photoconductor **24**.

The developer unit **23** includes a longitudinal hopper **86** to contain toner as a developer or a developing agent, and a developing device **87**. Inside the hopper **86**, there are provided: an agitator **88**, a toner supply roller **80**, and the like. The agitator **88** is rotatably driven by a driving means. The toner supply roller **80** is disposed below the agitator **88** in the vertical direction and is rotatably driven by a driving means. The toner in the hopper **86** is agitated by a rotary drive of the agitator **88** and is moved toward the toner supply roller **80** by its own weight. The toner supply roller **80** includes a metal core and a roller portion which is formed of foamed resins and is coated on a surface of the metal core. The toner supply roller **80** rotates while adhering the toner accumulated in the bottom of the hopper **86** on its surface thereof.

Inside the developing device **87** of the developer unit **23**, a developing roller **81** rotating while contacting the photoconductor **24** and the toner supply roller **80**, and a thin-layer forming blade **82** a tip end of which contacts a surface of the developing roller **81** are disposed. The toner adhered to the toner supply roller **80** inside the hopper **86** is supplied to the surface of the developing roller **81** at a contact portion between the developing roller **81** and the toner supply roller **80**. The toner supplied on the surface of the developing roller **81** is regulated its layer height when passing through the contact position between the developing roller **81** and the thin-layer forming blade **82**. The toner, of which layer height has been regulated, reaches a developing area being the contact portion between the developing roller **81** and the photoconductor **24**, and adheres on the electrostatic latent image formed on the surface of the photoconductor **24**. Due to the adhesion of the toner, the electrostatic latent image is rendered visible as a toner image.

Formation of the toner image is done with each process unit **26**, and a toner image of each color is formed on each of the photoconductor **24** included in each photoconductor **24**.

As illustrated in FIG. **2**, an optical writing unit **27** is disposed vertically above the four process units **26**. The optical writing unit **27** as a latent image writing device optically scans each photoconductor **24** in each of the four process units **26** with the laser beam L emitted from a laser diode based on image data. Due to this optical scanning, a latent image corresponding to each color is formed on the surface of the photoconductor **24**. With this structure, the optical writing unit **27** and the four process units **26** serve as visible K-, C-, M-, and Y-toner image forming means on at least three latent image carriers.

The optical writing unit **27** includes a light source, a laser diode included in the light source, a plurality of optical lenses and mirrors, a polygon mirror, and a polygon motor; and causes the light source to emit laser beams L onto the photoconductor via the plurality of optical lenses and mirrors while laser beams being deflected by the polygon mirror driven by the polygon motor. Alternatively, the optical writing unit **27** may perform optical writing by the LED light emitted from a plurality of LEDs of LED arrays.

A transfer unit **75** is a belt unit disposed vertically below the four process units **26**, and moves the endless-belt shaped intermediate transfer belt **22**, while stretching it, in the counterclockwise direction in FIG. **2**. The transfer unit **75** includes, other than the intermediate transfer belt **22**, a drive roller **76**, a tension roller **20**, four primary transfer rollers **74** (K, C, M, and Y), a secondary transfer roller **21**, a belt cleaner **71**, a cleaner backup roller **72**, and the like.

The intermediate transfer belt **22** is supported by the drive roller **76**, the tension roller **20**, the cleaner backup roller **72**, and the four primary transfer rollers **74** (K, C, M, and Y) that are disposed inside the loop formed by the intermediate transfer belt **22**. The thus-configured intermediate transfer belt **22** is rotated in the counterclockwise direction driven by the drive roller **76** that rotates counterclockwise driven by a drive means.

The rotating intermediate transfer belt **22** is sandwiched between the four primary transfer rollers **74** (K, C, M, and Y) and the photoconductors **24** (K, C, M, and Y), respectively. With this nipping, an outer surface of the intermediate transfer belt **22** contacts each of the photoconductors (K, C, M, and Y) **24**, respectively, thereby forming four primary transfer nips for K-, C-, M-, and Y-color.

Each of the primary transfer rollers **74** (K, C, M, and Y) is supplied with a primary transfer bias from a transfer bias power source, whereby a transfer electric field is generated between the photoconductors **24** (K, C, M, and Y) and the primary transfer rollers **74** (K, C, M, and Y), respectively. In place of the primary transfer rollers **74** (K, C, M, and Y), a transfer charger or a transfer brush may be used.

The Y-toner image formed on the surface of the photoconductor **24** for Y-color of the process unit **26**Y for Y-color enters into the primary transfer nip for Y-color accompanies by a rotation of the photoconductor **24**Y for Y-color. The Y-toner image formed on the surface of the photoconductor **24** for Y-toner is primarily transferred on the intermediate transfer belt **22** due to an effect of the transfer electric field and nip pressure. The surface of the intermediate transfer belt **22** on which the Y-toner image has been transferred passes through the primary transfer nip for M-, C-, and K-colors according to the rotation of the belt **22**, and the M-, C-, and K-toner images on the photoconductors **24** (M, C, and K) are sequentially, primarily transferred on the Y-toner image in a superimposed manner. With the superimposing primary transfer, a four-color toner image is formed on the intermediate transfer belt **22**.

The secondary transfer roller **21** of the transfer unit **75** is positioned outside the loop of the intermediate transfer belt **22** and includes the intermediate transfer belt **22** nipped between the tension roller **20** disposed inside the loop and the secondary transfer roller **20** itself. With this nipping, a secondary transfer nip is formed at a portion where the outer surface of the intermediate transfer belt **22** contacts the secondary transfer roller **21**. The secondary transfer roller **21** is supplied with a secondary transfer bias from a transfer bias power supply. With this application, a secondary transfer electric field is formed between the secondary transfer roller **21** and the tension roller **20** connected to an earth.

A sheet feed tray **41** containing a plurality of recording sheets P in a stack of sheets is disposed vertically below the transfer unit **75**. The sheet feed tray **41** is slidably disposed in a housing of the printer **100** and attachably detachable therefrom. The sheet feed tray **41** is so disposed as to contact a topmost sheet of the stack of the recording sheets and starts to rotate counterclockwise at a predetermined timing so that the recording sheet is sent toward a sheet conveyance path one after another.

A registration roller pair **43** including two registration rollers is disposed at an end of the sheet conveyance path. The registration roller pair **43** stops rotation of the two rollers upon the recording sheet P conveyed from the sheet feed tray **41** is nipped between the rollers. Then, the registration roller pair **43** restarts rotary driving and sends the recording sheet to the secondary transfer nip, so that the nipped recording sheet is synchronized with the four-color toner image on the intermediate transfer belt **22** within the secondary transfer nip.

The four-color toner image on the intermediate transfer belt **22** contacting the recording sheet at the secondary transfer nip is transferred en bloc onto the recording sheet by the secondary transfer electric field and nip pressure, so that a full-color toner image is formed on the recording sheet with added performance from white color of the sheet. The recording sheet on which a full-color toner image is formed is separated from the secondary transfer roller **21** or the intermediate transfer belt **22** due to the curvature radius of the roller or the belt when passing through the secondary transfer nip. Via the conveyance path after the above transferring process, the recording sheet is conveyed to a fixing device **40**.

Residual toner which has not been transferred to the recording sheet P is adhered to the intermediate transfer belt **22** which has passed through the secondary transfer nip. The belt cleaner **21** contacts the outer surface of the intermediate transfer belt **22**, and the residual toner is cleaned from the surface of the intermediate transfer belt **22** by the belt cleaner **71**. The cleaner backup roller **72** is disposed on an inner loop of the intermediate transfer belt **22** and supports the cleaning process of the belt by the belt cleaner **71** from the inner side of the belt loop.

The fixing device **40** includes a fixing roller **45** including a built-in heat source **45***a* such as a halogen lamp, and a pressure roller **47** rotating while contacting the fixing roller **45** with a predetermined pressure so that a fixing nip is formed between the fixing roller **45** and the pressure roller **47**. An unfixed toner image carrying surface of the recording sheet which has been sent into the fixing device **40** is closely contacted the fixing roller **45** and is sandwiched at the fixing nip. Toner in the toner image is melted due to the heat and pressure so that a full-color image is fixed onto the recording sheet.

When a single-side printing mode is set by an input via numeric keys on a control panel or by control signals from a computer, the recording sheet discharged from the fixing device **40** is discharged directly outside. The recording sheet is then stacked on a sheet stacking section on an upper surface of an upper cover **56** of the housing.

In the exemplary embodiment, four process units **26** (K, C, M, and Y) and the optical writing unit **27** construct a toner image forming unit to form a toner image.

The upper cover **56** of the housing of the printer **100** is supported about the shaft member **51** and rotatable as indicated by an arrow A of FIG. **2**. When the upper cover **56** rotates counterclockwise in FIG. **2**, the upper cover **56** is open with respect to the housing of the printer **100**. In this state, the opening above the housing of the printer **100** is largely exposed. The optical writing unit **27** is also rotatably supported about the shaft member **51**. When the optical writing unit **27** is rotated counterclockwise in FIG. **2**, the upper surface of the four process units **26** (K, C, M, and Y) are exposed.

The process units **26** (K, C, M, and Y) are detached by opening the upper cover **56** and the optical writing unit **27**. Specifically, when the upper cover **56** and the optical writing unit **27** are open to expose the upper surface of the process units **26** (K, C, M, and Y), and the process units **26** (K, C, M, and Y) are pulled upward, and then, the process units **26** (K, C, M, and Y) are taken from the printer body.

Because the process unit **26** can be detached after opening the upper cover **56** and the optical writing unit **27**, attachment and detachment of the process unit **26** can be done without having any stress position such as bending at the waist or cowering, and by verifying an inside of the housing from above. Therefore, work burden can be reduced and any operation error can be prevented from occurring.

In the exemplary embodiment, the process unit **26** including the photoconductor unit **10** and the developer unit **23** is attachably detachable from the printer **100**; however, each of the developer unit **23** and the photoconductor unit **10** may be attachably detachable from the printer **100** as an individual unit.

FIG. **4** is a perspective view of an external wall **101** which is a left-side external wall of the printer **100**, seen from an interior side of the printer.

As illustrated in FIG. **4**, a cavity forming member **210** is disposed on an interior wall of the external wall **101**. A port forming member **220** is secured to cover the cavity forming member **210**, thereby forming an acoustic device **200** employing a Helmholtz resonator.

The external wall **101** is fixed to the housing of the printer **100** by screws and is not opened by the user even when the replacement of consumable parts is performed. In the exemplary embodiment, the external wall **101** is fixed to the housing with screws; however, any other fixing method can be employed.

The printer **100** generates various sounds such as a driving sound when transmitting a rotary drive force to the rollers from the drive motor, moving sound of each roller, and sound of rotation of the polygon mirror included in the optical writing unit **27**. Such sound transmitted outside the printer **100** may be a noise that causes stress to people surrounding the printer **100**. The acoustic device **200** is designed to absorb such noise.

FIG. **1** schematically illustrates an acoustic device **200** according to an embodiment of the present invention.

The acoustic device **200** of the Helmholtz resonator includes a port forming member **220** as a first member to form a wall on which a port **203** that connects a cavity **201** and an outside. The acoustic device **200** further includes a cavity forming member **210** as a second member to form the other part of the structure of the cavity **201**. In the present embodiment, the material of the cavity forming member **210** is resin, which can be manufactured easily and has a density less than that of metal, which is the material for forming the port forming member **220**.

A flange **221** is formed on the port forming member **220** through burring, and the interior of the flange **221** is the port **203** having a cross-sectional area S and a length H. The port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210** are fastened together by screws or by insert molding. The volume of the cavity **201** formed by the cavity forming member **210** is V.

Burring is a manufacturing method used to form the flange around the opening and includes: making a base hole; inserting a punch having a greater diameter than the base hole to extend a border of the base hole; and forming a flange around the opening. The port **203** is formed by the burring, so that a material to form the port **203** is not prepared separately from the port forming member **220** that forms part of the wall to form the cavity **201**, and the port **203** having an opening **202** is formed.

The acoustic device **200** as illustrated in FIG. **1** is disposed such that the opening of the port **203** faces a sound source as a sound absorption target. Thus, the sound as a sound absorption target comes in the port **203**, so that an optimal sound absorption effect can be obtained.

Concerning the acoustic device **200** as illustrated in FIG. **1**, if a static volume of the cavity **201** is V, a cross-sectional area of the port **203** is S, a length of the port **203** in the connection direction is H, and an acoustic velocity is c, and a resonant frequency absorbed by the acoustic device **200** is f, then the following equation stands:

$$f=c/2\pi\times\{S/(V\times H)\}^{1/2} \quad (1)$$

As represented by the formula (1), the frequency of the sound absorbed by the acoustic device **200** can be obtained by the volume V of the cavity **201**, the length H of the port **203**, and the cross-sectional area S of the port **203**.

There are three methods, from the aforementioned formula (1), to make the frequency of the sound that the acoustic device **200** absorbs a low frequency: (i) increase the volume V of the cavity **201**; (ii) lengthen the length H of the port **203**; and (iii) reduce the cross-sectional area S of the port **203**.

In the Helmholtz resonator, sound that enters the port **203** is absorbed, so that the cross-sectional area S of the port **203** is preferably large to improve the sound absorption effect, so it is not recommended to reduce the cross-sectional area S of the port **203** to make the frequency of the to-be-absorbed sound a lower frequency.

In addition, in a structure in which the port **203** is formed by burring, the height H of the port **203** can be determined based on the diameter of the base hole and that of the punch to extend the base hole. When the size of the base hole is the same, as the punch's diameter increases, the height H increases. However, when the punch's diameter increases, the cross-sectional area S of the port **203** also increases. If the cross-sectional area S increases, the frequency of the to-be-absorbed sound shifts to a higher frequency. Therefore, it is difficult to lower the frequency of the to-be-absorbed sound by lengthening the length H of the port **203**.

Accordingly, as a method to make the frequency of the to-be-absorbed sound a lower frequency, it is preferred that the volume V of the cavity **201** be increased.

In addition, because the sound that did not enter the port **203** enters into the external wall surface around the opening of the port **203**, the wall of the port **203** among the walls forming the cavity **201** is preferably formed of a metal that excels in the prevention of sound transmission.

When the sound is incident to the wall, transmission loss of the sound increases or the sound is not transmitted easily as the mass of the wall per unit area increases. When the material of the wall is uniform, the sound does not transmit through the wall as a depth of the wall is larger and a density of the material of the wall per unit area is greater. As a result, among the walls to form the cavity **201**, the wall on which the port **203** is disposed is formed of sheet metal with a density higher than that of the resin used to form the cavity forming member **210**, so that the transmission of the sound can be restricted. Further, if the wall of the port **203** is formed of sheet metal, because the sound on a side opposite the sound source is not transmitted abut is to a large extent reflected, the sound directed to the port **203** of the Helmholtz resonator after being reflected increases relatively, so that the sound absorption effect can be improved.

The acoustic device **200** according to the exemplary embodiment includes the cavity **201** formed inside the cavity forming member **210** made of resins, and the port **203** formed of the port forming member **220** made of sheet metal serving as a cover of the port **203**. Because the cavity **201** is formed by the cavity forming member **210**, the volume of the cavity **201** can be increased, so that the frequency of the to-be-absorbed sound can be set to a low frequency.

As the metal for the port forming member **220**, an iron plate such as a galvanized steel plate may be used. Alternatively, aluminum plate or other metals may be used. Examples of resin materials for the cavity forming member **210** include polycarbonate or ABS resins, but not limited thereto.

If the frequency of the sound absorbed by the acoustic device **200** is the same, the cross-sectional area S of the port **203** is set to be relatively large by increasing the volume of the cavity **201**, which makes the sound incoming to the port **203** easier and improves the sound absorption effect.

The port **203** is formed employing the plate member with burring method, so that the length H of the port **203** can be longer than a structure in which a hole is simply bored through the plate member and the length H of the port **203** corresponds to a thickness of the plate member. As a result, if the frequency of the sound absorbed by the acoustic device **200** is the same, the cross-sectional area S of the port **203** is set to be relatively large, thereby improving the sound absorption effect.

The image forming apparatus disclosed in JP-3816678-B includes the acoustic device employing a Helmholtz resonator, in which the cavity is formed by overlapping two pieces of sheet metal. When forming a cavity by processing sheet metal, the sheets are bent, squeezed, and joined to each other. However, because sheet metal is difficult to process, it is difficult to form the cavity including a large volume with high precision while maintaining a good seal. Accordingly, the structure to form a cavity with sheet metal alone as disclosed in JP-3816678-B requires that the cross-sectional area S of the port is reduced to absorb the sound with a low frequency. However, as noted above, an acoustic device employing a Helmholtz resonator absorbs the sound incoming through an opening of the port into the cavity. Reducing the cross-sectional area S of the part is not preferable because the sound absorption effect is lowered.

By contrast, the acoustic device **200** according to the present exemplary embodiment includes the cavity **201** formed of the cavity forming member **210** employing resins. Part formed of resins can be molded into a desired shape with precision by casting the resinous material in a metal mold. Thus, the acoustic device **200** of the present embodiment can provide the cavity **201** including a large volume with high precision while maintaining a good seal.

When the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210** are closely attached by insert molding, the metal-made port forming member **220** is secured to the metal mold to form the cavity forming member **210** as an insert part. Then, the metal mold is filled with the resinous material for the cavity forming member **210**. When the resins are cured, the cavity forming member **210** is closely secured to the port forming member **220**. Use of the insert molding enables the number of steps to produce the acoustic device **200** to be reduced compared to a method to join the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210** that are individually formed and to reduce the production cost. Further, compared to the structure to join the parts, the sealing property at a boundary of the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210** can be improved and the sound absorption effect can be improved.

The printer **100** includes an external cover formed of resinous material and disposed to cover the sound sources, such as the polygon mirror and the drive motor, which emit sound when operating. As illustrated in FIG. **4**, the external wall **101** as a part of the external cover formed of resinous material serves as the cavity forming member **210** that forms a wall other than the wall on which the port **203** of the cavity **201** is disposed. Because the cavity forming member **210** is added to the external wall **101** which functions as an external cover, the cavity forming member **210** to construct the acoustic device **200** needs not provided separately. With this structure, the printer **100** can be manufactured with a reduced number of parts, thereby reducing the weight and the size of the printer **100** and a manufacturing cost thereof.

FIG. **5** illustrates the acoustic device **200** including the port **203** disposed farther inside the cavity **201** than the port forming member **220**.

Edges of the opening **202** of the port **203** formed by burring may include burrs, and the burrs are not desired for a user or a service person to come in touch with the printer **100** in maintenance, for example. In the structure as illustrated in FIG. **5**, because the flange **221** extends into an interior of the cavity **201**, the edge portion of the opening **202** of the port **203** positions inside the cavity **201**, and therefore, the burrs, if any, cannot be touched from outside. With this structure, the acoustic device **200** can be disposed at a position which the user or service personnel may come in touch with.

FIG. **6** illustrates an acoustic device of FIG. **5** including the opening **202** with round corner portions **220***b*. Because the opening **202** includes the round corner portions **220***b*, the sound easily enters the port **203**, and an optimal sound absorption effect can be obtained.

FIG. **7** illustrates the acoustic device **200** including a sealing member **204** disposed at each joint portion between the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210**. The sealing member **204** positions between the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210** and deforms, by being pressed, along each surface of the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210**. Further, compared to the structure to join the parts, the seal at a boundary of the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210** can be improved and the sound absorption effect can be improved.

The sealing member **204** may be an elastic member formed of rubber. However, the sealing member **204** is not limited to an elastic member that returns to an original state when released from the pressure after deformation, but may be a member such as clay that remains deformed even when released from the pressure as far as the joint portion between the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210** is closely sealed.

FIG. **8** illustrates a structure in which a groove portion **220***a* is created on the port forming member **220** at the joint portion between the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210**, and each sealing member **204** is disposed in each groove portion **220***a*. The groove portion **220***a* is disposed and the sealing member **204** is disposed in the groove portion **220***a*, so that the seal is further improved and the sound absorption effect is enhanced. In FIG. **8**, the groove portion is disposed on the port forming member **220**; however, the same may be disposed on the cavity forming member **210**.

Instead of the sealing member **204** as illustrated in FIGS. **7** and **8**, grease may be coated on the joint portion, which may improve lubrication of the driving part such as gears. The grease has high viscosity and does not flow easily, so that the grease can be retained at the joint portion. When the grease coated on the joint portion is sandwiched between the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210** and is pressed thereby, the grease moves along the surface of the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210**, thereby securing the sealing property of the joint portion. In the structure to coat the grease, because the number of parts can be reduced compared to the structure to provide the sealing member **204**, assembling property is improved, low cost manufacturing is achieved, and services of repair and maintenance can be improved.

It is noted that leakage of the grease can be reliably prevented by providing the groove portion at each joint portion as illustrated in FIG. **8**.

Modified Example

FIG. **9** schematically illustrates a housing **120** of the printer **100** and an external cover **110** according to a modified embodiment of the present invention.

In the present modified example, the structure of the printer **100** and its operation to form an image is similar to the exemplary embodiment described heretofore.

The printer **100** includes the housing **120** formed of metal and various parts and components are secured to the housing **120**. The resin-made external cover **110** covers the housing **120**. The plurality of ports **203** of the Helmholtz resonator is formed on the thus-formed housing **120** of the printer **100**. A plurality of cylindrical ribs **111** is so formed as to surround each portion opposite the port **203**. As illustrated in FIG. **9**, a tip end of the rib **111** joins the surface of the housing **120**, thereby forming a cavity **201** of the Helmholtz resonator between the external cover **110** and the housing **120**.

In the modified printer **100**, the housing **120** serves as the port forming member **220** as a first member and the external cover **110** serves as the cavity forming member **210** as a second member.

In the modified example, because the acoustic device **200** employing the Helmholtz resonator is formed by adjusting shapes of joining parts with the housing **120** and the external cover **110**, the number of parts employed in the printer **100** can be reduced, thereby achieving weight reduction of the printer and production thereof at a lower cost.

The modified example may further include a cavity forming member **210** other than the external cover **110**.

When the cavity forming member **210** and the port forming member **220** are newly added to form the acoustic device **200** employing the Helmholtz resonator, which may result in increase in production cost and weight, and therefore, is not preferable. By contrast, when part of the housing **120** is used to form the port forming member **220**, the port forming member **220** need not be provided in addition to the housing **120**. As a result, space reduction, weight reduction, reduction of the number of parts, and a low manufacturing cost may be achieved.

Further, the housing **120** of the printer **100** has bored holes for weight reduction. Such holes may be used as the ports **203** for the Helmholtz resonator, thereby making a process to bore the hole for the port **203** unnecessary and enabling to reduce the manufacturing cost.

In the exemplary embodiments of the present invention, a case in which an electronic device employing the acoustic device is an image forming apparatus; however, the present invention may be applied to any other electronic device other than the image forming apparatus as far as the electronic device includes a sound source to emit sound during operation and an acoustic device to absorb the sound emitted from the sound source.

The aforementioned embodiments are examples and specific effects can be obtained for each of the following aspects of (A) to (M):

<Aspect A>

An acoustic device **200** employing Helmholtz resonator, including: a first member such as a port forming member **220** forming a wall on which ports such as a plurality of ports **203** that communicates to an outside, among walls forming a cavity such as a cavity **201** of the Helmholtz resonator; and a second member such as a cavity forming member **210** to form the other wall of the cavity. The second member formed of a resin that can be manufactured easily with a density lower than that of the first member such as a metal.

With such a structure, as described in the above embodiments, because the first member is formed of a material with a density higher than that of the second member, the transmitted sound can be restricted more than the structure formed of the material used solely for the second member. In addition, because the second member is formed of a material easily manufactured than the material for the first member, the sealing property is improved and the volume of the cavity can be secured with high precision than the structure formed of solely the first member. By securing the volume in the cavity, sound with a low frequency can be absorbed. By forming the cavity with high precision, the sound absorption effect can be improved while maintaining a good seal.

The present invention provides an optimal acoustic device according to the aspect A, capable of reducing the transmitted sound and increasing the sound absorbing effect with respect to the low-frequency sound.

<Aspect B>

In the aspect A, materials for the first member such as the port forming member **220** include metals, and materials for the second member such as the cavity forming member **210** include resins.

With such a structure, as described in the above embodiments, because the first member is formed of a material with a density higher than that of the second member, the transmitted sound can be restricted more effectively. In addition, because the second member is formed of the resins easily manufactured than the metals, the cavity can be formed with higher precision while maintaining a good seal. As a result, the acoustic device according to the aspect B improves the sound absorption effect with respect to the low-frequency sound while restricting the transmitted sound.

<Aspect C>

In either of the aspect A or B, a through-hole such as the port **203** of the port forming member **220** as the first member is formed by burring to a plate member.

With this, as described in the present embodiments, without separately providing a member to form the port to the first member forming part of the wall of the cavity **201**, a port with an opening such as the opening **202** can be created. Thus, the acoustic device can be manufactured at a low cost.

<Aspect D>

In either aspect A to C, an opening such as the opening **202** of the port **203** includes round corner portions **220*b***.

As a result, the sound easily comes inside the port **203**, and an optimal sound absorption effect can be obtained.

<Aspect E>

In either aspect A to D, the port **203** is disposed inside the cavity **201**.

With this structure, the acoustic device **200** can be disposed at a position which the user or the service person may come in touch with.

<Aspect F>

In either aspect A to E, one of the port forming member **220** as the first member and the cavity forming member **210** as the second member is made an insert part and the other is formed by insert molding.

With this aspect, manufacturing costs can be reduced by a reduction of the number of assembly processes, the sealing property at a boundary of the port forming member **220** and the cavity forming member **210** can be improved, and the sound absorption effect can be improved.

<Aspect G>

In either aspect A to E, a deformable member such as a sealing member **204** is disposed, which is sandwiched by the first member such as the port forming member **220** and the second member such as the cavity forming member **210** and deforms, by being pressed, along each surface of the first and second members.

With this aspect, a gap is prevented from being generated at the connection portion, the sealing property of the cavity **201** can be improved, and the sound absorption effect can be improved.

<Aspect H>

In either aspect A to E, a grease is coated on a joint portion between the first member such as the port forming member **220** and the second member such as the cavity forming member **210**.

With this aspect, a gap is prevented from being generated at the joint portion with a structure that can be provided at a low cost, a sealing property of the cavity **201** is improved, and the sound absorption effect can be obtained.

<Aspect I>

In either aspect G or H, a groove portion **220*a*** is disposed at a joint portion between the first member such as the port forming member **220** and the second member such as the cavity forming member **210**.

With this structure, a further sealing property can be obtained by the structure to provide the deformable member or the grease to the joint portion.

<Aspect J>

An electronic device such as a printer **100** including an acoustic device to absorb sound during printing, includes an acoustic device **200** as a sound absorption means according to one of the aspects A to I.

With this structure, while restricting transmitted sound during the operation of the electronic device, the sound absorption effect relative to the sound with a low frequency can be improved.

<Aspect K>

In the aspect J, a structure member such as the housing **120** that supports a sound source such as a polygon mirror that emits sound during operation is disposed. At least a part of the structure member serves as a wall on which the port **203** is disposed, that is, as the first member such as the port forming member **220**, among the walls forming the cavity **201**.

With this structure, the printer **100** can be manufactured with a reduced number of parts, thereby reducing the weight and the size of the printer **100** and a manufacturing cost thereof.

<Aspect L>

In any one of the aspect J or K, a resinous member such as an external cover **110** is disposed to cover sound sources such as a polygon mirror and a driving motor that emit sound during operation, and a part (the external cover **110**) of the resinous member serves as the second member such as the cavity forming member **210** and forms a wall other than the wall on which the port **203** of the cavity **201** is disposed.

With this structure, the printer **100** can be manufactured with a reduced number of parts, thereby reducing the weight and the size of the printer **100** and a manufacturing cost thereof.

<Aspect M>

An electrophotographic image forming apparatus such as a printer **100** including an electronic device according to any one of the aspects J to L.

With this structure, while restricting transmitted sound during the operation of the image forming apparatus, the sound absorption effect relative to the sound with a low frequency can be improved.

Additional modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is therefore to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced other than as specifically described herein.

What is claimed is:

1. An acoustic device comprising:
an opening;
a flange forming the opening;
a first member including the opening and the flange; and
a second member joined to the first member, thereby forming a cavity, wherein
the second member is formed of a material with a density lower than a material of the first member.

2. The acoustic device as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the material for the first member is a metal and the material for the second member is a resin.

3. The acoustic device as claimed in claim **1**, further comprising:
a port in the first member, wherein the port is formed by burring.

4. The acoustic device as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the opening in the port includes round corner portions.

5. The acoustic device as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the port is disposed inside the cavity.

6. The acoustic device as claimed in claim **1**, wherein one of the first member and the second member is an insert part and the other of the first member and the second member is formed by insert molding.

7. The acoustic device as claimed in claim **1**, further comprising:
a deformable member between the first member and the second member, wherein
the deformable member pressed by the first member and the second member deforms along a surface of each of the first member and the second member.

8. The acoustic device as claimed in claim **1**, wherein grease is applied on a joint portion between the first member and the second member.

9. The acoustic device as claimed in claim **8**, further comprising:
a groove portion at the joint portion between the first member and the second member.

10. The acoustic device as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the acoustic device employs a Helmholtz resonator.

11. An electronic device comprising:
an acoustic device employing a Helmholtz resonator, the acoustic device including,
a first member forming a wall for a cavity of the Helmholtz resonator, the wall in which a port communicating to outside is formed, and
a second member joined to the first member and forming the other wall for the cavity, wherein
the second member is formed of a material with a density lower than a material of the first member.

12. The electronic device as claimed in claim **11**, further comprising:
a structure member that supports a sound source that emits sound during operation, wherein
at least a part of the structure member serves as the first member in which a plurality of ports is formed.

13. The electronic device as claimed in claim **11**, further comprising:
a resinous member disposed to cover the sound source that emits sound during operation, wherein
at least a part of the resinous member serves as the second member and forms a wall of the cavity other than the wall in which the plurality of ports is disposed.

14. An image forming apparatus comprising:
an electronic device including an acoustic device employing a Helmholtz resonator, the acoustic device including,
a first member forming a wall for a cavity of the Helmholtz resonator, the wall in which a port communicating to outside is formed, and
a second member joined to the first member and forming the other wall for the cavity, wherein
the second member is formed of a material with a density lower than a material of the first member.

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